Harry Potter: Magic, Myth, and Meaning

Faculty Contact Information

Name:
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Course Information

Course Description

"Words are our most inexhaustible source of magic" - Dumbledore

Magic, like literature, is a way of finding meaning in the mayhem and maelstrom of life, a way of imposing order on, or even creating the world around us. Using other texts (Shakespeare, C.S. Lewis, Tolkien, Greek myth and Arthurian legend) this course will analyse how J.K. Rowling, by using an alchemy of intertextuality, conjured a world that explores our interconnected myths, magical rituals, archetypes and shared histories to make meaning of our selves.

Course Goals

Literary scholar John Granger calls the Harry Potter series of novels our "shared text" of the twenty-first century. This course allows students to engage with the 'shared text' of the novels and world of characters and place them in a critical context. Each week the course addresses a different approach to the works in relation to the narrative structure and content of Harry Potter, exploring and identifying the interconnections, cross-pollinations and intertextual sharing with classical mythology, Arthurian romance, gothic romance, detective, coming-of-age, hero's quest and the British school days novel. Students are encouraged to consider issues such as character, love, friendship, truth-telling, heroism, justice, law, war, punishment, identity, meaning, death, and free will and will engage in critical close reading, discussion and assignments each week.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Summarise key texts that influenced and inspired the Harry Potter series
2. Demonstrate and illustrate knowledge through persuasive argument and critique, both orally and in effective and well-presented critical, analytical and argumentative writings about Harry Potter and connected literature.
3. Assess their own experiences as readers and writers in an intertextual landscape

Course Assignments, Grading, and Assessment

Assignment	Percentage	Grading Requirements
Attendance and Participation	20%	
Journaling	20%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Character Study Group Presentation	30%	Please see rubric on MyStudy
Essay	30%	Please see rubric on MyStudy

Brief Assessment Overview

Assessment 1: Journaling
Due:

Students submit 10 journal entries that must show evidence of having completed the set readings and engaged with the seminar questions.

Assessment 2: Character Study Group Presentation
Due:

Choose one character in the series that seems to conform to one of the 12 Jungian archetypes and a moment when Rowling makes this character's actions especially striking, puzzling, revealing, or meaningful. Drawing on your skills of close reading and analysis, examine the scene's details for evidence of significant implications of the character's behaviour.

Assessment 3: Essay: Comparison Essay – Exploring the Alchemical Elements of Intertextuality (2,500 words)
Due:

A variety of texts explored throughout the semester may be thought of as a source for JK Rowling's Harry Potter series, Rowling seems drawn to a number of themes, plot structures, and characters from various myths, genres and legends. These range from obvious references to more subtle echoes and nuances. This essay asks that you choose one other text to compare with Rowling's texts. What does a close comparison between details in the two texts reveal?

Grading

Alternative formats of the FIE Grading Rubric are available in the Student Resources area of MyStudy@FIE.

Relevance	Knowledge and Understanding	Analysis, Critical Thinking and Integration of Experiential Learning	Scholarship and Style
Questions are interpreted correctly; Argument/thesis is clear and developed throughout; Discussion is focused on topic of the questions; Irrelevant content and discussion are not included	Recommended literature and/or research guidelines are used and interpreted appropriately; Selection and use of evidence shows understanding and insight; There is evidence of study beyond the recommended literature and that introduced in the module	Approach shows evidence of analysis and independent reasoning; Originality in argument; Evidence of critical insight and reasoned questioning of assumptions; Integration of connections and experiences outside	Conclusions are well justified and complete; Facts reported and statements made are accurate; Writing is clear and fluent; All sources are appropriate, accurately acknowledged and formatted in recognised style;

			of the formal classroom	All work is the student's own
A 93-100 %	Totally appropriate interpretation and relevant; Excellent and thorough thesis development	Comprehensive understanding and mastery of core evidence and extensive wider reading	Excellent analytical skills, outstanding evaluation of evidence, independent and original critical insight; Meaningfully integrates experiential learning where appropriate	Exceptional fluency and accurate writing using appropriate language, conclusions are well-justified; Accurate and thorough referencing
A- 90-92%	Almost wholly appropriate interpretation and relevant; Very strong thesis	Very strong understanding of evidence and clear evidence of appropriate wider reading	Well-developed analytical skills, excellent evaluation of evidence, shows strong critical insight; Effectively integrates experiential learning where appropriate	Almost wholly accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language, conclusions are full and justified; Accurate referencing
B+ 87-89%	Appropriate interpretation and relevant; Good thesis throughout	Strong understanding of evidence and appropriate wider reading	Very good analytical skills, strong evaluation of evidence; Shows critical insight; Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives	Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language; conclusions are justified; Accurate referencing

B 83-86%	Largely appropriate interpretation and relevant; Thesis is clear	Good understanding of evidence and some appropriate wider reading	Good analytical skills, good evaluation of evidence; Shows critical insight; Acknowledges and compares experiential learning and other perspectives	Largely accurate and fluent writing using appropriate language; Conclusions are justified; Accurate referencing
B- 80-82%	Mostly appropriate interpretation and relevant; Thesis is underdeveloped but clear	Sound understanding of evidence and some wider reading	Sound analytical skills; Sound evaluation of data; Shows some critical judgement identifies experiential connections	Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent; Sound use of referencing conventions
C+ 77-79%	Some appropriate interpretation and relevant; Thesis is underdeveloped and lacks clarity	Evidence is largely understood and some wider reading	Sometimes inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Shows some critical judgement though often descriptive; Identifies experiential connections	Sound level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported; Sound use of referencing conventions
C 73-76%	May contain some misinterpretation and/or irrelevant material; Thesis lacks clarity	Evidence is largely understood; Limited reading beyond material introduced in module	Mostly inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Scant critical judgement mostly descriptive;	Some level of accuracy and written fluency and some use of appropriate language; Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported;

			Identifies experiential connections	Sound use of referencing conventions
C- 70-72%	Limited interpretation and relevance; Thesis is inconsistent	Weak understanding of evidence; Limited reading beyond material introduced in module	Mostly inconsistent analytical skills; Some evaluation of data; Lacks critical judgement; Little integration experiential learning	Inconsistent written fluency; Weak use of appropriate language; Weak justification for conclusions; Adequate use of referencing conventions
D 60-69%	Limited interpretation and relevance; Lacks thesis	Weak understanding of evidence and limited, inappropriate wider reading	Inconsistent and weak analytical skills, poor evaluation of evidence, lacks critical insight; Little integration of experiential learning	Inconsistent written fluency; No justification for conclusions; Inaccurate use of referencing
F 0-59%	Significant misinterpretation and irrelevant material	Lacks understanding of evidence and inappropriate or no wider reading	Lacks analytical skills, lacks evaluation of evidence, lacks critical judgement; Lacks integration of experiential learning	Poorly written with little fluency; No justification for conclusions; Poor referencing; Evidence of plagiarism or inappropriate use of AI

Policies specific to this course

- **Co-curricular Activities and Field Trips:** Field trips for your FIE courses have been planned to help students achieve the learning objectives of the course and are required. They take place during class time unless otherwise notes. Details about required visits appear on the class by class schedule below. Please note that any make up for missed co-curricular activities are at the personal expense of the student.
- **Late submission of work:** Written work may be submitted later than the due date only with express permission in advance of the due date from the course instructor. Late work will receive a 5% reduction in points for each 24-hour period handed in past the deadline,

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including each weekend day. Work submitted a week late will be marked at a C or lower. Any extensions made beyond the last class meeting must be requested in writing to the faculty and include any information on the circumstances that require the extension, the nature of work yet to be submitted, and the date by which the work will be received. If said work is not received by the agreed extension date, barring further exceptional circumstances, the work will not be given credit.

- **Late arrivals to class or site visit:** Please arrive on time. Lateness, particularly on days with co-curricular visits, results in missed course material. Faculty may use their discretion to mark a student as 'Absent' if they feel the student has arrived too late or left too early to be considered 'Present' for that session.
- **Trigger Warnings:** Some topics covered in class may expose students to past traumas and evoke a negative reaction. Sensitive topics can vary, such as sexual violence, death, racism, or xenophobia. I want this to be an inclusive space where every student feels comfortable; therefore, I will provide content warnings before lectures for sensitive subject matters. Content warnings are meant to give students a forewarning so they can prepare for their emotional safety. It is important to note that anything in the environment could be a trigger for someone's trauma, such as smell, sound, or texture; it is impossible to account for all possible triggers, and ask for grace as I do my best as an educator to warn students of potentially distressing content during lectures, assignments and/or discussions.

Attendance and Participation

- Regular attendance is essential in order to pass a course. A class constitutes lectures, student presentations, discussions, seminars, co-curricular activities, tests, and examinations. In addition, under UK Home Office regulations class attendance is mandatory.
- Class attendance and participation is formally recorded and incorporated into a student's final grade.
- In addition to physical presence in class, a student's participation in a class is evaluated on the mastery of assigned course readings as reflected in a consistent, valid contribution to class discussions, in-class exercises, and in asking questions that enrich the on-going discourse. Consistency and validity in participation is expected in every class. Limited participation will have a negative impact on a student's participation score.
- When unexpected events cause students to miss a class, it is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the faculty member to notify them in advance, or as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Absence from class does not relieve a student of responsibility for assignments. Students bear the ultimate responsibility for all missed class material and assessment.
- If a student misses 25% or more of a course, then they may be awarded a failure for the course and/or not permitted to finish the course.
- See the full attendance policy here

Required Readings

Students are expected to have read the Harry Potter series prior to the course.

Katherine Grimes's essay "Harry Potter as Fairy-Tale Prince, Real Boy, and Archetypal Hero

Extracts from:

The Hero Myth as defined by Otto Rank and Joseph Campbell, The Epic of Gilgamesh, T. H. White's The Sword in the Stone, The Fellowship of the Ring; The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe; Greek myths and The Hunger Games.

Additional Resources and Readings

Orwell, G (1993, 1999). *Down and Out in Paris and London*.

Porter, R (1996). *London: A Social History*. Penguin.

Sandhu, S. (2003). *London Calling: How Black and Asian Writers imagined a City*. HarperCollins.

MyStudy@FIE

MyStudy@FIE is FIE's virtual learning environment based on the open-source platform Moodle. Students are required to access MyStudy@FIE for course information, readings, link to resources, assignment submissions and communication with faculty.

FIE's Values in the Curriculum

A unique aspect to FIE's curriculum is our courses reflect an engagement with values of 1) knowledge and inclusivity, 2) ethics and human rights, 3) social and cultural engagement, and 4) sustainability. For information about each of these values and how each of FIE's courses aligns with them, please see Our Values.

Topics

- **Intertextuality: A literary Alchemy Introduction:** How do writers interpret London and its history, architectures, people, and geography? Why is London such a source of enormous inspiration?
- **Rowling the Reader as Writer:** Why does London work so well as the setting for a Dystopian novel? We investigate how history, imagination and the hope for a better future collide.
- **Hero's Journey:** London seen through the eyes of the newly arrived, the transient, and those making London their new home.
- **Archetypes and Characters:** We explore Jung's archetypes and the characters in HP and across literary history. What is their importance? How do we deconstruct them for contemporary readers?
- **The Subaltern:** Those on the margins; using post-colonial theories we explore the characters without agency and consider class, identity and power
- **Myth:** We explore the darker side of London: The London populated by the poor, the criminal, and the forgotten.
- **Magic, Spells, Symbols and Language:** Imagining a future London- how does it change? And why? What are writers attempting to communicate with us in these texts?
- **Glorious Genre:** The detective novel, Gothic, British School days novel: what does Harry Potter have in common with these classic genre literatures?
- **Magical London:** London as the backdrop for fantasy, extraordinary happenings, and magical experiences-how does a big, bustling and impersonal city provide the elements to create a strange and uncanny literary world?

Possible co-curricular activities

- City of London walk
- Walking tours of locations that inspired Harry Potter and other literature
- The Making of Harry Potter Experience
- Film viewing Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

Academic Integrity

By enrolling at FIE, you have joined an academic community and you are expected and required to act honestly regarding the work you submit for assessment in your courses. Academic integrity is closely related to the concept of good academic practice.

Any attempts to Cheat; Fabricate; Plagiarise; Collaborate without Authorisation; Participate in Academically Dishonest Activities; and/or Facilitate Academic Dishonesty will be viewed as a breach of this regulation.

Please see FIE's Academic Integrity Policy in full.

Most students do not have any problems understanding the rules and expectations about acting honestly at university. If you have any questions you must talk to your faculty or a member of FIE's Academic Team.

Writing and Language Support

FIE's Writing Support Tutors are available to assist students of all levels of expertise with all phases of the writing process. Available year-round and to all students. To book an appointment or for more information visit www.fie.org.uk/wst.

Please note that FIE allows the use of a foreign language/English dictionary in exam situations for students where English is not their primary language UNLESS the use of the dictionary would give the student a significant advantage (e.g. where the exam is aimed at getting the students to define terms that might be found in the dictionary).

Accommodations for Students

Students who wish to use academic accommodations at FIE can register to do so via FIE's Administration Team, by providing the appropriate supporting documentation. Students who have approved FIE academic accommodations should discuss them directly with their faculty member(s) within or around the first few class sessions, or via email. Exams are facilitated by FIE faculty and students should give 2 weeks' notice to faculty members if use of approved exam accommodations is required. The Administration team can assist students and faculty with liaison and facilitation as needed.

Additional Policies and Resources

Mental Health and Stress Management Support
FIE offers mental health support. If students wish to seek this support, including with FIE's counsellor, simply email studentlife@fie.org.uk. If you have a counsellor from back home that you are seeing, we strongly encourage you to maintain contact with them throughout your time studying abroad with FIE.

Diversity and Inclusivity
FIE regards its housing and classroom facilities as safe spaces to live, study, and work with students, faculty, and staff who are understanding, supportive, and trustworthy. Inappropriate,

derogatory comments and/or actions, harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination are not tolerated. Any such behaviour will be investigated and dealt with appropriately. Students must be respectful of diverse opinions and of all class members regardless of personal attribute and use inclusive language in written and oral work.

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